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SUBJECT: STRENGTHENING THE AU'S COMMUNICATIONS ARCHITECTURE
-- PROJECT UPDATE

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 754
[1](#)B. ADDIS ABABA 853
[1](#)C. ADDIS ABABA 1242

[1](#)1. Summary: USAU held its second C3IS workshop on September 9-11 to continue the U.S. commitment to the African Union (AU) to assist in establishing a communications architecture for the African Standby Force (ASF). The meeting brought together civilian and military communication experts from the AU, UN, U.S. and the EU, as well as members from the AU's Peace and Security Commission and Management Information Systems (MIS) department. Participants recommended more relief for the current communication challenges faced by the AU's mission in Somalia, creation of an operations center for the AU's Peace and Security Operations Division and finalization of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the US and AU. In addition a proposal was made for a five-year implementation plan to develop a network that will provide VSAT-based communications services to all the regional planning cells, logistics centers, and brigade HQs. End Summary.

Background

[1](#)2. As a result of a September 2005 G-8 meeting at the AU, the USG and the AU entered into an historical agreement to substantially upgrade the integration and communications capacity of the AU in executing the AU's "Roadmap for the Establishment of the African Standby Force." From this, the U.S. Department of State agreed to support a Command, Control, and Communication Information System (C3IS) to provide a High Frequency (HF) radio voice network, with a follow-on Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) capability, to facilitate interoperability and information sharing between the AU, the three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and two Regional Mechanisms (RMs), and the ASF Brigade headquarters. This system would link, via voice, data, and fax: (i) the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; (ii) the five headquarters of the regional ASF brigades; (iii) their subordinate units; and (iv) the proposed depot facility. The backdrop of this program was to support regional peacekeeping and counter-narcotics efforts through Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) funding. USAU held a workshop in February 2009 and has since held several meetings that have led to improved political support for the project and better communications for the AMISOM forces.

Current Situation and Proposed Look Forward

[1](#)3. Since the last workshop, the following developments have taken place:

- An MOA was revised and agreed upon by the AU and USG participants in this workshop, and is ready for final review by AU and State Department lawyers.
- VSAT connection was established successfully in June 2009 and will be operational again when the AU MIS reconnects the link at the Network Operation Center in Addis Ababa.
- The previously procured equipment that was staged at CECOM in New Jersey has been transferred to USAFRICOM in Stuttgart. The ITAR-restricted equipment in this package (Harris 5800 radios) are ready to be shipped to Burundi and Uganda pending USAFRICOM staffing and approval.
- The non-restricted equipment that will be utilized to set up an initial operations center at the AU is also ready to be shipped, with the goal of delivering and installing it within the next two months.
- An AU Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Defense (MOD/CHOD) meeting was held on May 15 paving the way for the AU to accept the C3IS proposal and to move ahead with the program.
- The group reviewed a general five-year timeline for implementation at the various sites. Review of specific timelines is pending.
- Satellite phones are now functioning in Mogadishu allowing the Force Commander to talk to AU leadership.
- A UN support package arrived in Mogadishu in August and as of September 14, the AMISOM Headquarters unit in Addis Ababa is able to dial directly in to the Force Commander's desk in Mogadishu. It will also be able to provide VTC and telephone connectivity with encryption via the UN network.
- A biweekly working group was established by USAU comprised of local AU and State Department personnel to

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ensure efforts continue forward.

- The working group provided technical requirements for the future operations room and network center to GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), who is funding the construction of the new PSOD building.
- On August 19, AU Chairperson Jean Ping, Commissioner Ramtame Lamamra, and General Ward discussed C3IS. Lamamra emphasized that C3IS is essential to operationalize the ASF and he reaffirmed the AU's expectation that the US continues to "concretize" its commitment.

Workshop Outcomes

14. The head of the AU's Peace Support Operations Division Mr. Sivuyile Bam expressed pleasure with the current efforts and opined that the once defunct program is now moving forward. His primary concerns were:

- Political and policy issues need to be addressed immediately by the AU leadership. MIS and PSOD must collaborate to move this project forward. Politics, rather than technology, is now impeding progress.
- While the architecture is being designed and the equipment procured, the system should be designed to be functional across all levels, including the ability to communicate with the UN units and facilities.
- When the initial field visits are made to the various regions, the assessment team should take a close look at not only the capability of communication between the AU and the regional headquarters, but also how the regional headquarters communicate with their member states. (Note: we reminded Bam that the USG had not agreed to provide communications equipment linking the RECs/RMs with individual member states, and he agreed.)
- The operations center must be established prior to Exercise Amani Africa in March 2010 in order to test communications between the AU and the regions.
- The AU leadership needs to persuade MIS to provide more support to this project. Bam recommended using USG and UN senior leaders to pressure the AU leadership to take more ownership of the program and to help improve cooperation

within the different departments.

¶5. The group asked Bam to give workshop participants a list of other donors who are providing funding for communication systems so they can coordinate efforts. For instance, participants learned of an EU fund for handheld radios, computers and other equipment being procured to support Exercise Amani Africa. This equipment which will be left behind after the exercise is over could be integrated in to the C3IS program.

¶6. The workshop recommendations were:

- C3IS should have its own secure network. In crisis situations, PSOD cannot compete with other entities for access to scarce network resources. A dedicated network for operations support is required.
- HF/VHF radio communications should be improved by providing the Harris 5800 radios to Burundi and Uganda bilaterally in support of AMISOM. These should be shipped as soon as possible from Stuttgart.
- The Strategic Planning Management Unit (SPMU) should provide a memo to MIS to request support not only for future communication linkages but also to help configure several laptops for AMISOM in order for the Force Commander and senior leaders to have secure email over the AU domain. The laptops are available from the previously procured equipment in Stuttgart.
- During a field trip to the AU depot, attendees discovered unused PRC-77 radios, body armor, and night vision goggles that could support AMISOM forces. The AU leadership was not aware of this inventory. A team of J6 personnel from CJTF-HOA should test and inventory the equipment and then have the AU deploy it to the field as soon as possible. -- Bam should engage senior leadership, including legal counsel, on the MOA, CONOPS, and implementation of the PSOD building requirements and the initial stand-up of a temporary operations center.
- There should be a defined supporting policy for the technology and coordination of funding available from all sources.
- Further coordination is needed with GTZ to harmonize its proposed master IT plan for the new building and surrounding campus.
- Before the end of 2009, PSOD should conduct site surveys

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of the regions. The technical assessment teams should include AU and USG personnel, and identify communications capabilities and gaps.

- MIS agreed to appoint a key person to address VSAT services for PSOD.
- The MOA should be sent to the AU Legal department for their review and then to Africa Bureau legal in the next 60 days.
- In the next 30 days, the AU should draft a policy that outlines with more specificity than the declaration from the MOD/CHOD meeting what they want the architecture to look like.
- USAU should inform U.S. Defense Attaches in the five regions about the technical site surveys, and solicit their support for these technical teams to visit their areas in development of the C3IS program.
- PSOD should facilitate the establishment of a temporary PSOD Operations Center with basic initial capability and enhance it to full capability (i.e. secure voice, internet, fax) in the next 90 days.
- The AU should establish a PSOD C3I Network Operations Center with full capability. The capability of the PSOD C3IS should be extended to the RECs and the RMs. AFRICOM has already submitted a related GPOI request for FY10 funding for this purpose.
- These recommendations should be presented to the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Deputy Chairperson, and the directors of MIS, Human Resources, and the Legal Counsel for their understanding and agreement in the next 30

days.
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